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October 9, 1960

NSC REVIEW
COMPLETED.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honorable Thomas S. Gates
Honorable Livingston T. Merchant
Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Honorable Earl G. Harr, Jr.
Brig. Gen. A. J. Goodpaster

Attached is a brief memorandum of meeting with the President with respect to SAMOS. I hope you will find it accurate.

In view of the fact that this was a meeting with the President, you will of course handle this memorandum with appropriate discretion.

Gordon Gray
Special Assistant to the President

Encl.

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October 8, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
(Thursday, 6 October 1960 at 8:45 a.m.)

Present: Secretary Gates, Under Secretary Merchant, Director Dallas, Mr. Harr, General Goodpastor and Mr. Gray

The discussion concerned the extent to which information could be released about the contents of the package of the first SAMOS to be launched (scheduled for October 14). The specific question involved was whether government spokesmen should, upon launching, indicate that the contents of the package were classified or whether it should be acknowledged that there was photographic equipment involved in what is to be described as a research and development effort.

The following points were brought out in the discussion. One, despite the lack of earlier indications that the Soviet Union would seek to make any frontal assault on reconnaissance satellites in general, and SAMOS in particular, there has been recent evidence in Soviet semi-official publications that such an assault may be expected. Therefore, in any public pronouncements with respect to SAMOS extreme care must be taken to assure that at any stage official statements not compromise or be inconsistent with what may be necessary in subsequent official statements. In other words, any official statement must be made with full awareness that a careful counter-attack might have to be prepared against any Soviet attack.

It seems impossible to "get away" with the statement that the contents of the package of the SAMOS is classified in view of open testimony given earlier this year in Congressional hearings by Secretary Sharp, Under Secretary Charyk and General Ridgely, all indicating that there would be photographic equipment in the SAMOS and further indications in published record that there was testimony with respect to electro-magnetic equipment, type of orbit, degree of resolution, etc.

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The President decided that any public statements should be in as low key as possible but that it must be acknowledged that there was involved photographic and related equipment for research and development purposes. His commitment to release pictures is to be made.

(S) Gordon Gray

Gordon Gray
Special Assistant to the President

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